

LIBE 110
Critical Perspectives on Humanity
2025 SPRING - Syllabus

Course Information				
Course Code	Course Name	Location	Time	Instructional Modality
LIBE 110	Critical Perspectives on Humanity	TBA	TBA	F2F with Asynchronous-Online components



Landscape with the Fall of Icarus,
Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1526/1530–1569) circa. 1555.
 Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium
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Instructor Information	
Name:	
Office:	
E-mail:	
Office Hours:	

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Description

(3+0+0) 3 Credits / 5 ECTS

Prerequisites: None, but you must be committed to completing readings and improving critical thinking.

Course Overview

This course explores questions and issues that have shaped human history, aiming to foster a self-reflective, critical, and analytical understanding of human experiences. We will examine what it means to be human through various issues in history and modern society, with an emphasis on concepts like justice, happiness, love, and the meaning of life. You will engage with short primary and secondary texts, video materials, group discussions, and critical thinking assignments.

Central Question: The course will explore the central question:

What does it mean to be human?

We will examine the continuities, differences, and similarities in the human experience, considering how historical shifts in history, culture, and society shape our understanding of what it means to be human. Key questions include:

- What defines humanity across time and cultures?
- How do historical shifts and societal changes influence our conception of human nature?
- What makes life meaningful in personal and societal contexts?

You are also encouraged to propose your own questions to deepen the exploration.

Course Objectives

- Explore the concept of humanity and human experience from various historical, philosophical, and ethical perspectives.
- Engage in critical discussions and evaluate the relevance of these ideas today.
- Compare different approaches to key issues like survival, order in society, individual well-being, etc.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- identify different historical, ethical, and philosophical approaches to the main questions, issues, and challenges humanity and human beings have had to face pertaining to conceptions such as “survival in nature,” “order/disorder in society,” “individual wellbeing,” and so on;
- appraise in an analytical and critical manner how and why these differing historical, ethical, and philosophical approaches have emerged due to different historical contexts;
- formulate informed personal, intellectual, and critical viewpoints and ideas on historical and contemporary developments pertaining to humanity and humans.

Course Materials

- Weekly readings and videos (provided via LMS).
- Supplementary materials, including online video sources for historical background.
- You must complete all readings and videos before class to actively participate.

Student Workload

- The course will emphasize regular readings, discussions, and critical engagement.
- Expect assignments like journals, quizzes, and participation in group activities.

Planned In-Class Activities

- Lectures, brainstorming, Q&A sessions, case studies, in-class quizzes, debates, and group discussions.
- Group work will be an essential part of participation.

Class Readings and Office Hours

- Regularly complete the assigned readings and videos.
- Weekly office hours will be available to discuss questions and ideas about the material.

Assessment Methods

1. **Attendance** (4% of final grade)
 - Regular attendance and participation are mandatory. More than 12-hour absence will result in an automatic FX grade.
2. **Active Participation** (6%)
 - Active participation in discussions, debates, and activities.
 - Weekly critical journals (handwritten, 2 submissions: before midterm and final exams, 3 points each) documenting reflections on readings and class discussions.
3. **Quizzes** (20%)
 - Two quiz-like pop checkpoints during the semester (10 points each).
4. **Exams**
 - Midterm Exam (30%)
 - Final Exam (40%)
 - Dates for both exams will be announced ahead of time.

Grading

- **Attendance & Active Participation:** 10%
- **Quizzes:** 20%
- **Midterm:** 30%
- **Final Exam:** 40%

Total: 100%

Course Policies

- **Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism or copying others' work will not be tolerated.
- **Generative AI:** We will together use and refer to AI sources in our class sessions. Proper attribution for AI-generated content is required. Never use AI in exams.

Professionalism

- Please attend classes regularly, complete reading and viewing assignments on time, and aim to participate course sessions actively.

Student Services

- **Psychological Counseling:** Available for students in need of support.
- **Disability Services:** Contact the Specialized Support Coordinator if you require accommodations.

Weekly Topics

Week 1: Introduction to the Course: Exploring the Human Experience

Week 2: The Foundations of Human Understanding: Myths

Week 3: From Nomadic to Sedentary Life: Epics, Heroes, Monsters, and Identity

Week 4: From Epic to Tragedy: Ego, Society, and the Emergence of Reason

Week 5: Free Will, Determinism, and the Human Psyche

Week 6: Ethics and Morality: Making Ethical Decisions in an Uncertain World

Week 7: Reasoning and Fallacies: Critical Thinking in Everyday Life

Week 8: Ramadan Holiday – Spring Break – No Class

Week 9: Subjectivity vs Objectivity: Understanding the World

Week 10: Consciousness, Emotions, Needs, and the Unconscious

Week 11: Aesthetics, Beauty, and Love: Exploring Human Values

Week 12: Human Experience in Society: Conceptions, Contexts, and Approaches

Week 13: Social Order and Its Discontents: Traditions, Challenges, and Changes

Week 14: Ecological Perspectives on Human Experience: Sustainability and the Environment

Week 15: Happiness, Purpose, and Meaning: Pathways to a Fulfilling Life

Week 16: Last Remarks and Course Overview